

Just Miss June

By Virginia Leila Wentz

Summer after summer the same elderly quiet people had come to Mrs. Austin's pretty country boarding house, and the same noisy, ebullient children. Of course there had been some additions to the latter class, some defections from the former, but the character of the company had remained much the same. This year, however, came a new boarder of a distinctly different element. He was Paul Campbell, a playwright of some reputation.

Being the only eligible man on the place, Miss Austin had managed to lay hold of Mr. Campbell as her special property. At first he did not mind. Were not her eyes sufficiently blue? Was there not always about her the odor of orris and heliotrope? But when he discovered that both mother and daughter were trying to work the matrimonial game upon him he balked.

One warm day they had been down to the lake boating, and now they had turned their faces homeward.

"If you find the path rough for fashionable heels or tear your gown with the brambles or scratch your face with the wild rosebushes, on your head be the consequence," Paul Campbell was warning Miss Austin, who had capriciously chosen a path through the woods, while he had wisely indicated another.

"I don't care. It's too hot to breathe today, and I know this is the shorter way. I'll get us home more quickly than the other."

"Well, it must be single file," observed Campbell, with something like positive relief, remembering that the arrangement would do something to add to the difficulty of conversation.

"You'll have a good opportunity," threw back Miss Austin over her shoulder, "of determining whether my hair is all my own."

"Its glory," answered Campbell, quick again in saying the required thing, "must blind me to its defects, if there be any."

"So good of you to make the qualification," retorted Miss Austin.

Here and there the brier roses bloomed in all their exquisite pinkness. Campbell absent-mindedly broke off a spray. Absent-minded, too, he pulled the leaves from the stalk. Then he chanced to look upon the pink bud.

With a whimsical, half tender gesture he thrust it into his buttonhole. Oh, he was a fool, beyond doubt, to fancy such a connection. But those unostentatious little petals, showing their delicate veins as they tapered upward and infolding so much wild sweetness, reminded him of Miss June.

June was Mrs. Austin's younger daughter. She had wide, dark eyes and teeth of pearl, but she was not beautiful, like her sister Jane. Their names, in fact, many of the boarders thought, ought to have been turned about, for June was just like her sister's name, while Jane was as dusky and jubilant as summer's first month.

"There's a pleasure as well as a credit in dressing her," June had once overheard her mother say when she'd slipped Jane into a thin white frock and brushed her glossy curls. That was twelve years ago, June was only six, but her fragile little hands had gone together in mute protest, and her eyes had grown larger with half understood pain.

June, whom her household and the summer boarders saw; June of the infrequent speech, the shy, fugitive smiles and proud, reticent air—that was not June of the boarders. Their Campbell had grown to know June of the woods had in elusive grace, shining eyes, laughter as silvery as the rippling streams, exquisite fancies, quick, dramatic gestures and withal a delicate, childish abandon of spirit.

"Well," asked Miss Austin as they came out from the woodland path on to the sunny road, "have you settled the affairs of the nation? I looked back at you once or twice, but you were in such a brown study you didn't notice me," she pouted.

"Miss June, how could that be possible?" mocked her courteously. "Pshaw!" she said, twirling her sunshade indignantly. "I believe I'm nothing but a peg for you to hang compliments on."

"You are the magnet which attracts them," he corrected. Suddenly Miss Austin lifted her eyes.

"That wild rose bud in your coat is very pretty. Will you give it to me for a remembrance of the day?" Campbell's fingers closed upon the bud to detach it; then he remembered. "No, Miss Austin," he laughed, thrusting his hands into his pockets; "it would be inappropriate. When I go to the village tomorrow I'll get you some roses from the florist's."

One morning several days later they were in the woods together, June and he, under the silver column of a beech tree. She sat beside him, with her slim, brown hands folded in her lap and the wild rose buds withering in her dark hair. The pink of them had somehow stolen to her cheeks. She was happy today in spite of the fact that Campbell was chiding her.

"See here, young lady," he was saying half seriously, half playfully, "if you continue to evade me as you've been doing for the past few days I'm going to pack up my trunk and leave next week. What possible pleasure do you think I find in a lot of staid ladies who knit on the porches and children who squabble?"

"There's Jane," suggested the girl

demurely, watching the flash of a bird through a rift in the foliage. "She likes to be with you, Mr. Campbell, I'm sure. And I'm sure—here—the pearly teeth caught in the scarlet underlip—'Jane's' neither a staid knitting lady nor a squabbling child. And why should you miss me? I'm not beautiful like Jane. I'm just—"

"Just Miss June," finished Campbell simply. But there was a world of quiet pride in his voice. June trembled beneath his words, and knew not why she trembled. But there was sufficient dramatic force in his go toward the making of a great actress. She spied a spray of scarlet columbine on a gray rock overhanging a dark pool. Unconsciously the contrast of colors struck her artistic eye, and she made use of it all to hide her sudden emotion.

"Will you fetch me those columbines that wave from the rock and throw colored patches on the pool, Mr. Campbell?" said she quietly.

But when he had gone her hand went for support to the column of the beech, her bosom rose and fell and her wide eyes dilated, then half closed.

"Oh, dear God," she prayed inwardly. "I've never had any one in my whole life really to love me. And he is so big and so knightly. Don't let me imagine a vain thing that would break my heart. Let me remember that I am plain—and that he is just kind!"

"Here," cried Campbell cheerfully, coming back with a bunch of the columbine and handing it to her. "The scarlet just matches your lips, little maid." It was not alone her lips that were scarlet now; a flame spread boldly over her cheeks.

In a few moments she jumped up, laughing, smoothing out her blueingham frock. "If ever I come to regard myself as a bewitching fairy princess I'll hold you responsible, sir. But I must be going now. I'm still Cinderella," she added. "I promised mother to make the salad dressing for luncheon."

And so the fragrant summer month drifted irresponsibly on.

One warm evening when the air was filled with the gold of fireflies, a maze of spangles, now darkening, now brightening, Mrs. Austin came out on her side porch, which, for a wonder, was vacant, and swung her portly weight none too gently into the hammock. The silver of the moon was beginning to tremble through the leaves of the trees and to show patches of the garden path that wound toward the front gate.

"Those locusts sound awfully shrill," thought Mrs. Austin, trying ineffectually to put the hammock in motion. Then she lay there inert, yielding to the drowsiness of the air.

She must have dozed off a bit, for suddenly she started as if the way of one who tries to capture one's waking wits.

"And you know, dear, that I love you. I guess I've been loving you right from the first, but I didn't realize it till—"

Two figures had just passed the moonlit patch in the path and were emerging into the shadows that stretched toward the gate. Mrs. Austin couldn't exactly see who they were, but she recognized Campbell's rich, deep voice.

"At last!" she cried, smiling broadly. "Well, Jane deserved it—and she'll have a good husband." She raised herself up in the hammock. Sleep had fled.

Now, just at that moment Sarah, the cook, who had been buying some ribbon and rushing in one of the village shops, happened to enter the front gate. As she came abreast of the wide porch Mrs. Austin leaned over the railing.

"Sarah," she whispered, with maternal pride in her voice, "was that Miss Jane who went out of the gate then with Mr. Campbell?" It was a statement rather than a question.

"Yes," said Sarah, looking up quickly; "that wasn't Miss Jane, ma'am; it was just Miss June."

Catalogue of Misnomers. "A silver shoehorn is a misnomer," said a philologist. "So is a wooden milestone. So is a steel pen."

"A shoehorn is a piece of horn, according to its name. How can it be made of silver, then? In like manner a milestone can't be made of wood—though they have them, the same as nutmegs in Connecticut—nor can a pen, which strictly means a feather, be made of steel."

"Irish stew is a dish unknown in Ireland. Jerusalem artichokes were never heard of in Jerusalem. Prussian blue does not come from Prussia, but from the red prussiate of potash."

"Galvanized iron is not galvanized. It is zinc coated. Catgut is not the gut of cats, but of sheep. Kid gloves do not come from kid skins, but from lamb skins."

"Sealing wax has no wax in it, nor is it a byproduct of the seal. Wormwood bears no relation either to wood or worms. Rice paper is never made from rice. Salt is not a salt."

"Copper coins are bronze, not copper. India ink is unknown in India. Turkeys come from our own country, from Turkey never."

A Lacy Poet.

Laziness does not always confer the long life claimed for it by Dr. Herbert Snow. Of proverbial laziness was Thomson, the poet, drowning away the greater part of his life in the garden at Richmond, listening to nightingales, writing the interminable poems that everybody now admires and nobody reads. There he could often be seen standing eating the peaches off the trees, "with his hands in his pockets." Such an instance of indolence would be hard to beat and should, one would think, have added at least ten years to his life. But Thomson died, at forty-eight.—London Chronicle.

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made, on the application of the undersigned

executor of said deceased, notice is hereby

given to the creditors of said deceased to

exhibit to the subscriber under oath or affirmation their claims and demands against the

estate of said deceased, within nine months

from this date, or they will be forever barred

from presenting or recovering the same

against the subscriber.

GEORGE E. DE CAMP.

ESTATE OF FRANCES L. SEID.

deceased.

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